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RAYMONT'S "BIBLE IN EDUCATION OF THE YOUNG"

The Use of the Bible in the Education of the Young. A Book for
Parents and Teachers. By T. RAYMONT, M. A., London,
LONGMANS, GREEN and Co., 1911. pp. x + 254.

"What, in these days of suspended judgment, bold criticism, and apparently wavering faith, is the use that can and should be made of the Bible, in the education of the young, by all, of whatever shade of religious belief, who value the best elements of individual character and of national life?" It was with the view of offering a solution to this question that our author undertook the preparation of this volume. The author is a teacher by profession and, while perfectly at home in the vast literature of Biblical scholarship, does not claim to offer any help to the student of the Bible, but to the teacher and parent who would use the Bible in their work of training the young. Having this purpose in mind, the author is careful to take but little for granted and gives an exhaustive resumé of Biblical literature, of both Testaments, which will prove of great value to those who have neither the patience nor the desire to wade through the numerous books, manuals, and encyclopedias dealing with the subject.

The first question that will naturally come up in a consideration of the subject is what should be the aim in the use of the Bible in the education of the young. This question is answered in the first chapter of the book, where the author properly comes to the conclusion that "the main and fundamental use of the Bible is that of helping to cultivate the religion of the heart—that sense of dependence upon, responsibility towards, and faith in a Being whose existence and whose wise purpose, notwithstanding many appearances to the contrary, most of us are constrained to acknowledge." The Bible is thus to be used as a text-book of

religion, its narratives, prophecies, psalms, and wise sayings are to serve as illustrations of the wisdom and power of God. But, in order to make intelligent use of the Bible in this way, it is necessary that we understand it fully and are familiar with its contents, in accordance with the best and latest results of students who made its study their specialty.

Our author, therefore, finds it necessary to give a resumé of the Bible from the point of view of modern Biblical scholarship, steering clear, as far as possible, from all controversial and doubtful matters. This resumé, preceded by chapters discussing the literary aspects of the two Testaments, occupies the larger part of the book and may be regarded as an introduction to the Bible from the teacher's standpoint. The scholar may find this perhaps superficial and defective, while the conservative parent or teacher may look upon it as heterodox and doubt-inspiring. This, however, any one who wishes to adopt a middle course, must expect and the value of one's work, as a popular book, is not diminished thereby. The author is certainly painstaking and conscientious, having made use of the best works on the subject and presenting his material in a form which appealed to him, as a teacher and a parent, to be the most intelligible and most useful for the purpose he had in mind. Gifted with remarkable lucidity and terseness in style, the author succeeded in presenting a difficult and complicated subject in a well-digested and systematically arranged form, which will be greatly appreciated not only by the novice and uninitiated but also by those who have given thought and time to the study of the subject.

Teachers will find the last few chapters, dealing with the method of presentation, most valuable. While there also but few original thoughts are found, most of the suggestions being fully covered in books on religious pedagogy, they will still become useful because of their particular and detailed application. The book, indeed, is valuable not so much because of its originality, as on account of the clear and logical presentation of the subject and the mass of material, gathered from various sources and put in a simple and attractive form. The book appropriately concludes with an exhaustive bibliography, covering all phases of the subject of Biblical study in so far as it interests a teacher. At

the end of the book two tables are given, one chronological, covering the events of the entire Biblical history, and the other a systematic arrangement of the subject, which may serve as a pattern for a schedule of studies, based on the Bible, for the different grades of the school.

The author naturally has the Christian teacher and parent constantly in mind, and for them the book will be of great assistance. The Jewish teacher, however, will gain but little from this work, since the attitude of the Jew towards the Bible is quite different from that of the Christian. Of course, the portion dealing with the New Testament has no practical value for the Jewish teacher, but even the chapters on the Old Testament can be used by him only with great care and circumspection. The author's attitude towards the manner of teaching Bible history (p. 20) will not be shared by the Jewish teacher, since to him the historic portions of the Bible not only serve a religious end, but they are at the same time the events that happened to his own ancestors, the history of his own people, which he should know and teach. And since this attitude affects greatly the method of presentation, the excellent suggestions of the author as to the treatment of Biblical subjects in instruction will have to undergo considerable modification before they can be applied by the Jewish teacher or parent. The author's verdict regarding Mr. Montefiore's "Bible for Home Reading," that "the editor's Judaism is so liberal that the Christian teacher must indeed be narrow-minded who cannot use the work almost as it stands." (p. 241), cannot be applied to the book under consideration, when used by the Jewish teacher. And this, not because of the narrow-mindedness of the Jewish teacher, but because of the great difference in the very aim and purpose of religious instruction that exists between the Jewish and Christian teacher, depending on the great difference between the Jewish and the Christian attitude towards religion in general.